



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEWS RELEASE

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Observing National Work Zone Awareness Week

Governor Jack Markell Calls for Public Awareness

Smyrna -- During a press conference held today at 1:45, at the Smyrna Rest Area, in observance of National Work Zone Awareness Week, Delaware Governor Jack Markell and others educated attendees on the importance of observing extra caution while traveling through work zones.

Recognizing the challenging work of employees within DelDOT's Traffic, Maintenance, Construction, Pavement, Planning and Bridge divisions, as well as DelDOT contractors, the event was part of National Work Zone Awareness Week. During this annual campaign, which runs from April 4-8, DelDOT reminds travelers to drive with caution within work zones and to respect the job and the lives of these men and women. The reason is due to these startling and frightening statistics:

- Nearly two people are killed and 84 are injured every day in highway work zones nationally.
- In a typical five-day workweek, an average of eight motorists and one worker are killed.
- An average of seven people are injured in a work zone every two hours.

Standing at the site of the Delaware Highway Memorial Garden, Delaware Governor Jack Markell told the group that the theme of this year's campaign is: "'Safer driving. Safer work zones. For everyone.' That means when motorists see an orange road sign, it means that road crews are working to provide a safer roadway. Safety is a two-way street. Help keep us safe, to keep you safe; slow down, be alert, stay focused, and expect the unexpected."

Don Weber, Chief Traffic Engineer for DelDOT told the crowd, "while it is often joked that the orange signs sprout like flowers each spring, it should be a reminder to all that work zones occur along our roadways each and every day of the year. It could be a major road construction project, a



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maintenance crew patching the roadway, a technician repairing a traffic signal, or a motorist assistance patrol aiding a disabled motorist. These are all work zones and require motorists to assist us in all being safe."

Weber continued, "Trends are showing increases in aggressive driving; following too closely and inattentive driving appear to be leading causes of work zone crashes. We know firsthand the dangers of working on the highway and unfortunately the sorrow that can result from work zone crashes. We ask that as you drive, pay special attention in work zones; for your safety and ours."

While DelDOT requires its employees to get regular work zone safety training, workers want to remind drivers that work zones are designed to warn motorists of upcoming hazards. When traveling through a work zone, please pay careful attention to the traffic control devices present:

- When you see the "orange and black," be extra cautious.
- Warning signs will let you know what to expect.
- Drums or cones will delineate your path of travel.
- Flag persons will help direct you along the way.
- Slow down and expect the unexpected.

DelDOT Acting Secretary Cleon Cauley noted, "Driver fatigue, excessive speed, driver distractions, and aggressive driving are just a handful of contributors for these senseless accidents. This is reality in the world of construction. These incidents are for real and they can just as easily happen to you or a construction worker. We consistently remind our employees to have all of their traffic control and safety devices in place, and to never let their guard down!"

Lisa Shaw, Deputy Director for the Delaware Office of Highway Safety (OHS) commented: "OHS is pleased to have a long-standing relationship with DelDOT, most notably as a collaborating partner in the development and implementation of Delaware's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). DelDOT's efforts to promote work zone safety support the goals outlined in the SHSP as well as support OHS goals to prevent crashes and injuries on Delaware roadways. We hope



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motorists will heed the warnings and drive extra cautiously when traveling through work zones."

The ceremony also included the unveiling of DelDOT's newest spokesperson for all of their safety programs: "Wally, the Work Zone Warrior." Wally was created with traffic cones and barrels that were no longer usable and stands almost 10 feet tall. While Wally made his first appearance at today's press conference, you will have the chance to meet our Work Zone Warrior at various locations throughout the state, including DelDOT buildings, Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offices, and other special events.

Delaware will be supporting the importance of work zone awareness with radio spots, print ads, and public service announcements. This recognition is given to roadway workers who put their lives on the line every day making the nation's highways safer for all of us.

For more information on this federally funded campaign, contact DelDOT Public Relations, at (302) 760-2080.

"Safety is a Two-Way Street. Help Keep Us Safe, To Keep You Safe."